

MAURICE GIBB DIRECTING TV SERIES AND FEATURE MOVIE

MAURICE GIBB is to become a film and TV director! Plans are nearing completion for him to direct a new TV comedy series titled "Jumbo," to be written by Ray Galton and Alan Simpson of "Steptoe And Son" fame. Also being lined up is a dramatic film named "Bunker," in which Maurice will direct Stanley Baker and Lionel Jeffries. Maurice is currently engaged in writing the music for both these ventures, and has already recorded some of his work with a large concert orchestra.

The "Jumbo" series is about the adventures of a crazy detective, while the movie is a war-time story concerning five men who are trapped in a bunker. The title theme for the film is one of the items which Maurice has already recorded. Both projects are expected to go into production in the near future.

In view of these new commitments, it is not now certain that Maurice will star in the London production of "Sing A Rude Song." Following its try-out run at Greenwich, a West End opening date is still awaited for the stage musical. But Maurice told the NME this week: "In view of the delay, I am no longer sure that I want to do it."

BBC-TV BUYS BEE GEES' SPECIAL More guests for Hump & Des shows CLIFF & DUSTY ON TV; NEW POP SERIES

THE Bee Gees' own TV special "Cucumber Castle," filmed in London last autumn, has been purchased by BBC-TV for screening in this country. No transmission date has yet been set, but it is expected to be shown some time next month. Besides featuring Barry and Maurice Gibb performing several new numbers, there are guest appearances in the special by Lulu, Frankie Howard, Vincent Price and Spike Milligan, as well as an extract from Blind Faith's open-air concert in London Hyde Park last summer.

Running order of four more shows in ATV's Engelbert Humperdinck series has now been set. Guests for editions screened up to May 24 have already been reported in the NME, and these are followed by Tony Bennett, Donald O'Connor, and Lesley Uggams (Sunday, May 31); Tommy Roe, Georgia Brown and Ken Berry (June 7); Clodagh Rodgers, Shani Wallis and Jack Benny (14); and the Four Tops and Elke Sommer (21).

ATV's Anglo-American Des O'Connor series has now gone into production, and will be seen in Britain this summer. Guest list includes Dusty Springfield, Mireille Mathieu, Sacha Distel, Liberace, Phil Harris, Kenneth McKellar, Robert Morse, Martha Raye, Teresa Graves, Joanne Worley, Dan Blocker, Arte Johnson and Elke Sommer.

The Glen Campbell-Bobbie Gentry special, which is being filmed in London this Sunday (26), will be

screened in BBC-2's "Show Of The Week" spot on Wednesday, May 6. It is being slotted into the spot usually occupied by the "Morecambe And Wise Show," which is taking a short break.

Cliff Richard launches a new series of "Personal Cinema" on BBC-1 on Friday, May 1. He will be talking to Michael Aspel about all aspects of his career, and selecting some of his favourite film clips. Subsequent editions will feature the choice of Tony Blackburn and Sacha Distel.

Dusty Springfield and Jon Hendricks guest in BBC-2's "Young Generation Show" on Saturday, May 2, and later the same evening the Pretty Things and Trader Horne are in "Disco 2." The following day (3), Carol Channing guests in the final edition of the current series of "Rowan And Martin's Laugh-In."

Grampian TV is launching a new eight-week series of "Pop Scotch '70" to be screened in May, June and July. So far booked are John Mayall, Fotheringay, Matthews' Southern Comfort, Blue Mink, Taste, Toe Fat, Renaissance, Deep Purple, the Move and Pentangle. Negotiations are still taking place for Canned Heat and several other groups. Director Alan Wallis told the NME that each group will be featured in a 15-25 minute spot.

Among other new bookings are Blue Mink in Thames-TV's "Mike And Bernie's Scene" on Monday, May 4; and Sons And Lovers in BBC-1's "Basil Brush Show" on Thursday, May 7. Dave Dee and Harmony Grass are among the guests in LW-TV's Judith Durham special, to be screened in the summer.